

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claim 1, 4, 5, and 8-12, as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus capable of drawing a gradient fill object defined by at least two apexes each having coordinate data and gray level value, said gradient fill object being described as a print object capable of being interpreted by the image processing apparatus, comprising:

detection means for detecting whether or not an object is a gradient fill object having gradation in a ~~one of~~ horizontal ~~or~~ and vertical ~~directions~~ direction, by interpreting the print object;

pixel count detection means for detecting, by interpreting the print object, a number of pixels which have substantially the same gray level value and are consecutively present in a direction perpendicular to the direction of gradation detected by said detection means;

drawing means for drawing at least one pixel for different gray level values in the direction of gradation, based on the coordinate data and gray level value of the gradient fill object; and

replication means for replicating, in the direction perpendicular to the direction of gradation, the pixels drawn by said drawing means in a number equal to the number of pixels detected by said pixel count detection means.

2. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said replication means copies gray level values, obtained by gray level calculation for all

pixels of a first row of a gradient fill object having gradation in the horizontal direction, in a number equal to the detected number of pixels.

3. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said replication means copies gray level values, obtained by gray level calculation for all pixels of a first column of a gradient fill object having gradation in the vertical direction, in a number equal to the detected number of pixels.

4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said replication means divides the pixels which have gradation and are consecutively present in the same row or same column into a plurality of pixel groups each including an equal number of pixels, ~~and in unit of~~ and, in each pixel group belonging to the plurality of pixel groups, draws a first pixel belonging to ~~the~~ each respective pixel group at a gray level value and replicates the gray level value of the first pixel for all pixels belonging to ~~the~~ each respective pixel group.

5. (Currently Amended) An image processing method capable of drawing a gradient fill object defined by at least two apexes each having coordinate data and gray level value, the gradient fill object being described as a print object capable of being interpreted by an image processing apparatus, comprising:

a detection step, of detecting whether or not an object is a gradient fill object having gradation in a ~~one of~~ horizontal or ~~and~~ vertical direction, by interpreting the print object directions;

a pixel count detection step, of detecting, by interpreting the print object, the number of pixels which have substantially the same gray level value and are consecutively present in a direction perpendicular to the direction of gradation detected in the detection step;

a drawing step, of drawing at least one pixel for different gray level values in the direction of gradation, based on the coordinate data and gray level value of the gradient fill object; and

a replication step, of replicating, in the direction perpendicular to the direction of gradation, the pixels drawn in said drawing step in a number equal to the number detected in said pixel count detection step.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 5, wherein said replication step comprises a step of copying gray level values, obtained by gray level calculation for all pixels of a first row of a gradient fill object having gradation in the horizontal direction, in a number equal to the detected number of pixels.

7. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 5, wherein said replication step comprises a step of copying gray level values, obtained by gray level calculation for all pixels of a first column of a gradient fill object having gradation in the vertical direction, in a number equal to the detected number of pixels.

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 5, wherein said replication step comprises the steps of dividing the pixels which have gradation and

are consecutively present in the same row or same column into a plurality of pixel groups each including an equal number of pixels, ~~and in unit of~~ and, in each pixel group belonging to the plurality of pixel groups, drawing a first pixel belonging to ~~the~~ each respective pixel group at a gray level value and replicating said gray level value of the first ~~first~~ pixel for all pixels belonging to ~~the~~ each respective pixel group.

9. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage memory which stores a control program capable of drawing a gradient fill object defined by at least two apexes each having coordinate data and gray level value, the gradient fill object being described as a print object capable of being interpreted by an image processing apparatus, said program comprising:

code ~~a code~~ of a detection step of detecting whether or not an object is a gradient fill object having gradation in a ~~in one of~~ horizontal or ~~and~~ vertical direction, by interpreting the print object directions;

code ~~a code~~ of a pixel count detection step of detecting, by interpreting the print object, the number of pixels which have substantially the same gray level value and are consecutive in a direction perpendicular to the direction of gradation detected in code of the detection step;

code ~~a code~~ of a drawing step of drawing at least one pixel for different gray level values in the direction of gradation, based on the coordinate data and gray level value of the gradient fill object; and

code ~~a code~~ of a replication step of replicating, in the direction perpendicular to the direction of gradation, the pixels drawn in the drawing step in the number detected in the code of the pixel count detection step.

10. (Currently Amended) An image processing method of drawing a gradient fill object defined by at least two apexes, each having coordinate data and gray level value, comprising the steps of:

judging whether or not an object is a gradient fill object having gradation in a horizontal direction or vertical direction; and

drawing the object by drawing at least one pixel for different gray level values in a plurality of pixels ~~consisting~~ of the object and replicating the ~~drawn~~ at least one drawn pixel for pixels having substantially the same gray level value as that of the ~~drawn~~ at least one drawn pixel, when it is judged that the object is a gradient fill object having a gradation in a horizontal direction or a vertical direction.

11. (Currently Amended) An image processing method of drawing a gradient fill object defined by at least two apexes each having coordinate data and gray level value, comprising the steps of:

judging whether or not an object is a gradient fill object having gradation in a horizontal direction; and

drawing the object by drawing pixels in ~~consisting of~~ a line in a horizontal direction based on the coordinate data and gray level value, reproducing the line of drawn pixels, and arranging the lines of drawn pixels ~~consisting of the line contiguously~~ in a

vertical direction, when it is judged that the object is a gradient fill object having gradation in the horizontal direction.

12. (Currently Amended) An image processing method of drawing a gradient fill object defined ~~be~~ by at least two apexes, each having coordinate data and gray level value, comprising the steps:

judging whether or not an object is a gradient fill object having gradation in a vertical direction; and

drawing the object by drawing at least one pixel of ~~of pixels consisting of~~ a line having substantially a the same gray level value in a horizontal direction, replicating the ~~drawn~~ at least one drawn pixel ~~in~~ a number of times equal to a number of pixels ~~consisting~~ of the line, and repeating the drawing and replicating ~~in the~~ a number of times equal to a number of lines in the object, when it is judged that the object is a gradient fill object having gradation in the vertical direction.